

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer readable medium having a computer program encoded thereon, comprising:
2 a first portion of said medium having a first program segment for facilitating the
3 selection of preferences for information to be displayed as part of a service control component;
4 a second portion of said medium having a second program segment for receiving
5 over a communication network information from a plurality of service providers in accordance
6 with said selected preferences; and
7 a third portion of said medium having a third program segment for displaying said
8 information within the service control component, wherein at least one of the plurality of service
9 providers is represented in the service control component by a unique icon that includes real time
10 status updates.
- 1 2. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein a proxy multiplexor aggregates the
2 information received from the plurality of service providers.
- 1 3. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the service control component is
2 configured in conjunction with a browser.
- 1 4. The computer readable medium of claim 3, wherein the service control component is an
2 embedded control bar.
- 1 5. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the service control component is an
2 independent display object.
- 1 6. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein said unique icon is selectable by the
2 user to retrieve additional information from a corresponding one of said service providers.

1 7. A service controller system for integrating information from a plurality of service
2 providers, comprising:
3 a proxy multiplexor which receives information from the plurality of providers,
4 wherein the proxy multiplexor aggregates the information from the plurality of providers; and
5 an end user service control component which receives information from the proxy
6 multiplexor, wherein each respective provider is represented by an individual icon within the end
7 user component, at least one of said icons displaying the most current information received from
8 its associated provider.

1 8. The service controller system of claim 7, wherein at least one of the plurality of providers
2 is an HTTP server.

1 9. The service controller system of claim 7, wherein the end user component is integrated as
2 part of a browser.

1 10. The service controller system of claim 7, wherein the end user component is a stand-
2 alone object.

1 11. The service controller system of claim 7, wherein new providers may be added for
2 display in the user's end user component via a centralized server.

1 12. The service controller system of claim 11, wherein the centralized server is an HTTP
2 server having SSL capabilities.

13. The service controller system of claim 7, further comprising a second end user component having individual icons representing others of the plurality of service providers, wherein both end user components receive information from the proxy multiplexor.

14. The service controller system of claim 7, wherein said individual icon may be selected to retrieve additional information from a corresponding one of said service providers.

15. A service controller system comprising:

- a plurality of service providers that provide information and content to a plurality of users;
- a proxy multiplexor for each of the plurality of users that receives information and content from the plurality of providers, wherein each proxy multiplexor aggregates the information and content from the plurality of providers for each user; and
- an end user control component which continuously receives updated information and content from the proxy multiplexor, wherein each respective provider is represented by an individual icon within the end user component, each individual icon being updated whenever new information is provided from the respective service provider associated with that icon.

16. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein the end user component includes a display portion that contains the provider icons.

17. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein the end user component is integrated as part of a Web browser.

1 18. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein the end user component is a stand-
2 alone display object.

1 19. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein new providers may be added for
2 display in the user's end user component via a centralized server.

1 20. The service controller system of claim 19, wherein the centralized server is an HTTP
2 server having SSL capabilities.

1 21. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein the proxy multiplexor is an executable
2 running on a user's machine.

1 22. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein each individual icon is updated
2 without action required of the user.

1 23. The service controller system of claim 15, wherein each individual icon provides an alert
2 to the user when updated with new information.

1 24. A method for displaying content from a plurality of service providers as part of a service
2 control component, comprising:

3 receiving from a user a selection of preferences for receiving and displaying the
4 content;

5 receiving over a communication network the content from the plurality of service
6 providers in accordance with the preferences; and

7 displaying the content in accordance with the preferences, wherein at least one of
 8 the plurality of service providers is represented in the service control component by a unique
 9 icon that includes real time updates comprising at least some of the received content.

1 25. The method of claim 24, wherein a proxy multiplexor aggregates the content received
 2 from the plurality of service providers.

1 26. The method of claim 24, wherein the service control component is configured in
 2 conjunction with a browser.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein the service control component is an embedded control
 2 bar.

1 28. The method of claim 24, wherein the service control component is an independent
 2 display object.

1 29. The method of claim 24, wherein said unique icon is selectable by the user to retrieve
 2 additional information from a corresponding one of said service providers.